

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, April 12, 2017, to meet with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:09 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan. Councilmember Silke I. Pope was unable to attend due to a family matter. Councilmember Edward V.J. Putens was unable to attend due to an injury. Councilmember Leta M. Mach was out of town.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Celia Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: James Coleman, Pradeep Ganguly, Mayank Kapur and John Mason, Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation; Kathleen Gallagher, News Review; Susan Walker, Greenbelt Community Development Corporation; Kap Kapastin, Quantum Management; Michael Hartman, Roosevelt Center Merchants Association; Bill Orleans and others.

Mr. Coleman said the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGEDC) considers Greenbelt a flagship area and said his team of 75 professionals is available to offer assistance to the city. He noted that Greenbelt is the fourth largest municipality in Prince George's County and is one of the most highly educated cities (44% of residents hold bachelor's degree or higher). Mr. Coleman added that the city is home to Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Capitol Office Park, SSAI, ISSI, GSK, Beltway Plaza Mall, Greenway Shopping Center, Martin's Crosswinds Conference Center, Trade Center Office Towers, Greenbelt Station and the Greenbelt Marriott Hotel and Conference Center.

Mr. Coleman explained the PGEDC Workforce Development that serves employers and job seekers in the county by offering One Stop Career Centers and Career Development Workshops and Assessments. He spoke about PGEDC training and certification programs in information technology, health care, transportation and construction.

Ms. Davis expressed concern that government workers in the city and county may lose their jobs due to anticipated federal government spending cuts. Mr. Coleman and Dr. Ganguly said the PGEDC Workforce Development Commission is well prepared to assist these individuals and place them into available jobs. Dr. Ganguly noted that highly qualified federal employees are attractive to government contracting agencies. Mr. Coleman said that the overall federal spending may shake out pretty well within the county due to the anticipated federal spending increases in defense and cyber security.

Mr. Coleman said the PGEDC focuses every day on attracting new businesses to the county. He said they actively talk about Greenbelt. Mr. Coleman noted many advantages to businesses relocating to this area, such as the lower cost of office space, taxes and minimum wage than in the District of Columbia, and the state tax credits and economic development fund. Mayor Jordan said he and Mr. Putens are concerned about businesses opting to locate in the Greater College Park RISE zone instead of Greenbelt.

Mr. Herling noted the importance of arts in economic development efforts. Dr. Ganguly agreed.

Mr. Herling asked about green tax credits and efforts by the PGEDC to bring green companies to the area. Dr. Ganguly said these efforts have been handled by the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Ms. Davis expressed concern about struggling small businesses in the city. Mr. Coleman spoke about several programs at PGEDC focused on offering assistance to small businesses. After discussion, he

suggested the PGEDC host a Small Business Day in the city to inform small businesses of the services offered by PGEDC. Mayor Jordan and Ms. Davis suggested PGEDC host this event in the city on a regular basis twice each year, perhaps at Roosevelt Center or Beltway Plaza. Ms. Davis mentioned that many small business owners won't come to a meeting due to work hours. Mr. Coleman mentioned that webinars can be provided to these businesses.

Mr. Coleman spoke about new economic development in the county including the MGM Casino and Resort and the Regional Medical Center. He noted the county is home to 14 federal government agencies and seven colleges and universities. There was discussion regarding the FBI headquarters relocation to the area.

Mayor Jordan commented on the changing nature of retail shopping. Mr. Coleman agreed, noting much of the change is due to the increase in online shopping.

Mayor Jordan commented on the thriving community at Greenbelt Station. He expressed concern about the Greenbelt Station developer being unsuccessful in its attempt to attract a retailer to a retail site within the development. Ms. Craze advised that the marketing period for the developer has elapsed and they are moving forward with transferring the retail site to the city for a park.

Mr. Herling noted the need to reexamine transportation in order to connect residents in Greenbelt East, Greenbelt West and Historic Greenbelt to all areas of the city. He asked if PGEDC would have a role in making this happen. Dr. Ganguly suggested a master plan be developed that included all areas of the city, such as a Greenbelt Forward Plan.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Mr. Coleman said PGEDC works with all area unions.

Mr. Herling asked if the city could succeed with economic development without hiring an Economic Development Director. Dr. Ganguly said the city already has an economic development team with City Council.

Mayor Jordan mentioned the city's work with the Sage Policy Group and Hyattsville Community Development Corporation. He asked how the PGEDC works with the municipalities in the county. Mr. Coleman said PGEDC meets with leaders of all municipalities, such as the meeting this evening, to exchange information and build awareness of the PGEDC within the communities.

Ms. Ard said she looks forward to working with PGEDC in the future. She mentioned that Greenbelt, in partnership with the City of College Park and Town of Berwyn Heights, was exploring a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program grant offered by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) for Greenbelt Road corridor improvements. Mr. Coleman said PGEDC would be happy to assist.

Mr. Kapastin, Beltway Plaza, said one thing the city is lacking is tablecloth restaurants. He also said that Beltway Plaza would like to have a PGEDC One Stop Career Center or other social service agency. Mr. Kapastin suggested Joe's Crab Shack be considered for an upcoming Thirsty Thursday event.

Michael Hartman invited PGEDC to attend a Roosevelt Center Merchants Association meeting. He suggested the meeting could also include representatives from Beltway Plaza and Greenway Center. Mr. Coleman said they would be happy to attend.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to several questions.

Several informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*

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